Problems regarding rail bridges

2498. SHRI SATISH PRADHAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the article captioned, "the thing about bridges—some are distressed and other distressing", which appeared in The Indian Express, dated the 7th October, 2002;

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto; and

(c) what steps are proposed to be taken to address various problems and bottlenecks mentioned in the news article, for improving the condition of rail bridges and their safety?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BANDARU DATTATRAYA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) All the Railway bridges are inspected as per laid down schedule in codes and manuals. Prioritisation of distressed bridges and other bridges has been planned for rehabilitation/rebuilding as per condition basis arising out of scheduled inspections. Various Committees' recommendations in the past are taken into account while planning and execution of bridge works. Rs. 1530 crores is allotted under Special Railway Safety Fund for repairs/rebuilding of bridge works to be completed in a span of five years upto 2005-06. Bridge works to be taken up under Special Railway Safety Fund has been identified and planned/sanctioned for execution and placed in Railways Works, Machinery and Rolling Stock Programme Part II and III for 2002-03. These works are in various stages of planning and execution.

Ticketless rail travel by Rallyists

2499. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that special trains and additional coaches were provided at Lucknow, for the use of persons who attended BSP's Dhikkar rally, to enable them to go back to their places;

(b) whether these people were allowed to travel without tickets;